



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE
For the
“Renewal of Agricultural Leases on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area.”

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 3, Bozeman
May 2009

Preface

Agricultural leases on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area have been in place for many years and have been managed to produce agricultural crops including grain and hay. Additionally, areas adjacent to these croplands have been developed for wildlife cover and food including set-aside grain, shelterbelts, and nesting cover for upland birds. This has been a very successful program for the lessees who produce a commodity and for the public that uses the area for wildlife viewing and hunting.

Proposed Action

Renew existing agricultural leases for a 5-year period (2009 – 2014) on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area near Townsend, MT.

Public Process and Comments

FWP is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on April 20, 2009.

Public comments on the proposed action were taken for 30 days (through May 20, 2009). Legal notices were printed in the *Townsend Star* and the *Helena Independent Record*, and the EA was also posted on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/>.

No comments were received from the public in relation to the proposed action and just one comment from an agency, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO's comments in relation to renewing the agricultural leases were: "According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales. The absence of cultural

properties in the area does not mean that they do not exist but rather may reflect the absence of any previous cultural resource inventory in the area, as our records indicated none.

It is SHPO's position that any structure over fifty years of age is considered historic and is potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If any structures are to be altered and are over fifty years old, we would recommend that they be recorded and a determination of their eligibility be made.

As long as there will be no disturbance or alteration to structures over fifty years of age we feel that there is a low likelihood cultural properties will be impacted. "We therefore feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should structures need to be altered or if cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project, we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated."

Based on this analysis, there would be no impacts to any cultural sites as a result of renewing the agricultural leases.

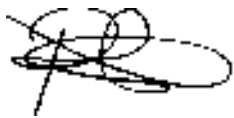
Final Environmental Assessment

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment and public comment, it is my decision to approve the proposed action for the Renewal of Agricultural Leases on the Canyon Ferry Wildlife Management Area.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



5/21/2009

Date

Region 3 Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks